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RACE MANAGEMENT RULE CHANGES 1993-1996
INTERNATIONAL YACHT RACING RULES

Starting and Finishing Lines (old rule 6)

Rule 6 which described some options of types of starting and finishing lines (masts and marks and on-shore posts) has been removed. The sailing instructions had to, and still must, describe the marks and identify the starting and finishing lines. However, a part of old rule 6 used to say that if an inner starting limit mark was laid, yachts had to pass between it and the outer mark. Now when the race committee want to lay an inner distance mark, they must clearly describe yachts' obligations, or the IDM will have no effect.

Postponements signals (rule 4.1)

The little used 'AP over a ball or shape' meaning there is a 15 minute postponement has been deleted. The 'AP' on its own (or over a class signal) continues to mean there is a postponement of unlimited time and the 'AP over a numeral pennant' for a particular number of hours, and the 'AP over A' for 'another day' both remain. There is a new signal of 'AP over H' (H for go home) meaning there is a postponement and new signals will be made ashore.

Individual recall when a yacht is over the line extension (old rule 8.1 new rule 7.1)

The race committee must signal an individual recall (code flag 'X') when one or more identifiable yachts are over the start line itself and must ignore those yachts over the line extensions. The reason is that those who are on the course side of an extension will know they're over, and to give a recall signal may confuse those who are just behind the actual line at the start.

Error in timing the warning period (old rule 4.4 (d))

Old rule 4.4 (d) strongly inferred that if the race committee displayed the preparatory signal say a minute early, it could simply get the timing of the start signal right in relation to the preparatory signal and it would be blameless. The deletion of the rule means that a race committee must restart the whole sequence if it makes an error in the timing sequence. The correct signal would be 'N' for abandonment (or 'AP' if before the starting signal.)

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Abandoning a race (Definition and new rule 5.3 (c))

A race may now be abandoned even before the start. An abandoned race is one that is declared void at any time and that may be resailed.

A general recall in a multiple start sequence (rule 4.3)

When there is general recall (first sub) for one class which coincides with the warning signal for next class to start, the race committee is left with an unwanted warning signal displayed. The new rules require the race committee to lower that warning signal after the general recall has been signalled; that effectively postpones that class. When the race committee is ready to restart the class that has had a general recall, it lowers the first sub with a sound signal. One minute later, up goes the warning and preparatory signals, and five minute later they both come down for the start when the warning signal for the next class will go up.

Replacement mark (rules 4.1 and 8.1)

The new rules require the race committee to make sound signals when it substitutes a mark by displaying code flag 'M' on a replacement buoy, vessel or other object.

Abandonment signals (rules 4.1 and 5.4)

Code flag 'N' displayed on its own used to mean 'race abandoned', now it means not only that the race is abandoned, but also that further signals will be made in the starting area. That's not much of a change, but there is a new signal 'N over H' (H for home) which means that the race is abandoned and new signals will be made ashore. The 'N over X' (abandon and resail) and the 'N over first substitute' (race cancelled) have been removed as the idea is that the race committee will decide on the water to abandon the race, and decides later whether the race should be re-sailed or cancelled. It can abandon a race at any time, even before the starting sequence has begun, but now, as before, the race cannot be abandoned after the start except for a specific reason; an error in the starting procedure, four weather, a mark shifted or missing, insufficient wind to complete the course in the time limit, or some reason directly affecting the fairness of the competition.

Cancellation (definition, old rules 4.1, 5.4, 5.5, 74.2 (b))

The definition of 'cancellation' has been deleted as has the cancellation signal ('N over X'). The race committee must now 'abandon' (code flag 'N') and decide later whether or not the race will be re-sailed. This is a better procedure, as the requirements that have to be met when stopping a race (for example because of a storm) are different to those to be considered when deciding whether or not to re-sail the race.

Abandoning when no yacht finishes within the time limit (old rule 10 new rule 9)

The race committee now has to abandon a race when no yacht has finished within the time limit, and no longer can it be argued that a race in which no yacht

finished within the time limit was a race in which every yacht should be scored 'DNF'. Having abandoned, the race committee must then decide whether or not to resail the race. There are no guidelines in the racing rules to help them make their decision.

A completed race (rule 5.5)

A race that has been abandoned after even just one yacht has sailed the course and finished, cannot be resailed unless the race committee is 'aware of the relevant facts and of the probable consequences of any arrangement to all yachts concerned for that particular race and for the series, if any, as a whole'.

Personal buoyancy (old 'rule' 4.1 'Y', new rule 60)

This is a new rule to replace the often used sailing instruction (and a rule hidden away on the 4.1 signals section of the old rule book). 'It shall be the individual responsibility of each competitor to wear adequate personal buoyancy when conditions warrant. A wet suit is not adequate personal buoyancy.'

Seriously hindering a yacht (old rule 31.2, new rule 30.1)

There is now a clear rule requiring a yacht that is not yet racing or that has completed her race not to seriously hinder a yacht that is racing. If a yacht infringes this rule and there is a hearing, a protest committee now has no option but to penalize.

Sailing the course - starting marks (rule 51.3)

Under the old wording of the rule, if a mark was placed on the pre-course side of the line the mark could not be said to 'begin bound or end a leg' and therefore never has a required side, and yachts could ignore it. With the new wording, a starting mark has a required side from the time a yacht is 'approaching the line from the pre-course side to start', so if it's reasonably close, it must be left on the correct side as a boat comes to the line to start. However, the obligations to leave it on one side or the other must be stated in the sailing instructions; just to say there will be an IDM (inner distance mark) would be meaningless.

Room at a starting mark (old rules 42(b) and 42.4 new rule 42(a))

Rule 42 (Rounding or passing marks and obstructions) has been reordered and the argument as to whether a leeward yacht could claim room at a starting mark has been resolved, no yacht has the right to room under rule 42 at a starting mark when approaching the line to start even if it is an obstruction (unless it's not surrounded by navigable water).

Touching a mark (rule 52.2(a))

The old rule used to require a 720, the new rule requires only a 360. The sailing instructions could, and of course still can, change this and might require a yacht to retire, or do a 720 or re-round, or take some other penalty. The new rule clarifies that not only must a yacht get clear as soon as possible after touching but that when she is clear, she must do the turn immediately.

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Spinnaker and whisker poles (rule 64.2)

The old rule on the spinnaker pole require that when a pole was used with a spinnaker, it has to be carried only on the side opposite to the boom; now it can be used either side with a spinnaker or a foresail. Furthermore, a spinnaker may now be set without a spinnaker pole, and if a pole is set, then there is no longer a requirement for the tack to be in close proximity to the end of the pole. The term 'whister pole' has been included to those classes that don't have spinnakers (and therefore no spinnaker poles). The change should eliminate a lot of 'technical' protests, especially in match racing.

Turns Penalties (old appendix 3, now appendix B1 1.1 and rule 52.2 (a))

The new rules make it clear that a yacht having decided to take a turn penalty for touching a mark, or a 720 for infringing a rule or part IV, must not only get clear as soon as possible after the incident, but that once she is clear she must immediately make her turn(s).

Accepting a 'scoring penalty' late (old appendix 3, new appendix B1 2)

When the 'scoring penalty' is in force, unless a yacht accepts the penalty (by displaying '1' or 'yellow flag') at 'the first reasonable opportunity which is usually immediately', then she loses the chance for a 20% but under the old rules this was increased to 50% at a hearing. Under the new rules the protest committee must disqualify her.

Touching a mark and infringing a rule of Part IV (appendix B1 1.1)

Under the new rules, when a yacht infringes a rule of part IV and hits a mark in the same incident, she need do just a 720, rather than a 720 + 360. There was nothing in the old rules to cover this.

Protest Flag (rules 68.3 (a) and (b))

Under the old rules, a code flag 'B' was always acceptable no matter what was said in the sailing instructions; under the new rules both code flag 'B' and a red rectangular flag are acceptable no matter what the sailing instructions say. Under the old rules protests were being ruled as invalid when the sailing instructions prescribed a 'B' flag and the yacht displayed a red flag without swallow tails. The words 'which is normally immediately' have been added to emphasize the importance of displaying the flag promptly.

Protest Fee (old rule 68.7)

There is no longer any reference to a fee, and hopefully any organizing authority or race committee that in the past has required a protest to be accompanied by a fee will in the future drop the requirement.

Requests for redress when the race committee makes an error

What hasn't changed is the fact that a yacht can get redress only when her finishing position has been materially prejudiced through no fault of her own. The change is to add the word 'improper', so that it is only when the race committee's action is 'improper' that redress can be given; it is not sufficient simply to establish that when the race committee did was outside its authority.